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MATTERS RELATING TO COMMITMENTS

The report on implementation

Note by the interim secretariat

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	2
	A. Committee mandate	1	2
	B. Scope of the note	2 - 3	2
	C. Possible action by the Committee	4	2
II.	CONVENTION PROVISIONS	5 - 6	2
III.	NATURE OF THE REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION	7 - 13	3
IV.	REQUIREMENTS FOR SECRETARIAT SUPPORT	14 - 16	5

Annex

Possible format and elements of the first report on implementation 7

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Committee mandate

1. At its eighth session, in the context of its conclusions on the first review of information, the Committee requested the interim secretariat to provide "considerations on the format and content of the report of the [Conference of the Parties] COP on implementation (Article 7.2(f))" (A/AC.237/41, para. 65). It further requested that the document address the kind of secretariat support needed, including financial and human resource implications.

B. Scope of the note

2. This note is a first effort by the secretariat to meet these requests in anticipation of the consideration of the report on implementation (ROI) at the first session of the COP (COP 1). It should be read in concert with the documents, also before the ninth session, on the first review of information (A/AC.237/45), the review of the adequacy of commitments (A/AC.237/47) and the roles of the subsidiary bodies (A/AC.237/46) because of the many linkages between the issues concerned.

3. Section II of this note reviews relevant provisions of the Convention. Section III considers the nature of the ROI and poses questions for consideration by the Committee. Section IV analyses the potential requirements for secretariat support, including the financial and human resource implications. A possible format, including elements of the first ROI, is attached as an annex.

C. Possible action by the Committee

4. The agenda of the ninth session is particularly crowded. If time permits, the Committee may wish to have a brief general exchange of views on the nature of the ROI. Alternatively, delegations could provide written comments to the interim secretariat particularly with regard to the questions posed in section III. In either case, a revised document would be prepared for the tenth session at which time initial planning decisions would be required if an ROI is to be issued in the context of COP 1.

II. CONVENTION PROVISIONS

5. The Convention provides that the Conference of the Parties shall "consider and adopt regular reports on the implementation of the Convention and ensure their publication" (Article 7.2(f)). Other relevant provisions of Article 7.2, especially the chapeau and subparagraph (e), require the COP, on the basis of all the information made available to it, to assess:

(a) The implementation of the Convention by the Parties;

(b) The overall effects of the measures taken pursuant to the Convention, in particular environmental, economic and social effects as well as their cumulative impacts; and

(c) The extent to which progress towards the objective of the Convention is being achieved.

6. Other provisions of the Convention are also directly relevant to the concept of an ROI. These include the following:

(a) The process for the communication and review of information from the Parties;

(b) The reviews of adequacy of commitments that are required at COP 1 and not later than 31 December 1998 (Article 4.2(d));

(c) The decisions to be taken by the COP at its first session on the arrangements to implement the provisions of Article 11 on the financial mechanism as well as any future decisions related to the financial mechanism; and

(d) The other matters for decision at COP 1 as provided for in the mandate of the Committee.

III. NATURE OF THE REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION

7. Taking account of the provisions of the Convention, the purpose of the report could be described as being to disseminate information on:

(a) The implementation of all aspects of the Convention by the Parties; and

(b) The international response to the climate change problem.

In order to facilitate discussion and obtain guidance from the Committee on the nature of the ROI, the interim secretariat proposes the following questions for consideration. The questions are posed in regard to the concept of the ROI in general and are not limited to the first ROI.

8. **Who should be the principal audience for the ROI?** One option, which would clearly distinguish the ROI from other COP documents and serve to fill a void, would be to design the ROI as a public outreach document that would explain the Convention and the resulting international action. Such a document would be targeted to policy makers, Government and business leaders, concerned citizens and journalists, that is, the informed public rather than experts on climate change or the Convention.

9. The decision on the intended audience will influence the style of the document. **Should the ROI be written in a popular, highly readable style or in a more detailed, technical style?** The answer to this question will have implications in terms of resource requirements, preparation time and public profile. While it is possible to suggest that the ROI could be composed of a popular summary and a highly technical report, it might be asked whether such a hybrid would be necessary bearing in mind the proposed audience. Moreover, the COP will have other technical documents at its disposal which will also be available to the public.

10. **What should be the place of the document in the sequence of COP activities?** The Committee may wish to consider whether the ROI would be designed as a document that, in reporting on the implementation of all aspects of the Convention:

(a) Provides a background for the deliberations of the COP and is published shortly before a COP session; or

(b) Reflects, and reports on, the decisions taken by the COP and is published soon after a COP session.

11. In this context, it will be important to situate the ROI within the spectrum of documents that will be considered by the COP -- and to avoid duplications of effort. These other documents are likely to include the national communications, the analysis and the compilation and syntheses of the communications, information on the global situation, the report of the operating entity (or entities) of the financial mechanism, the report of the session and any other relevant inputs resulting from the work of the subsidiary bodies (see A/AC.237/45, A/AC.237/46 and A/AC.237/47). It could be expected that much of the substantive content of the ROI would be drawn from such of these documents as would be available at the time of its preparation.

12. **Should the text of the ROI undergo a detailed process of consideration and adoption by the COP or should it be issued by the secretariat?** This question is directly related to the previous question posed and the answer should take account of the following:

(a) If the ROI is to be issued prior to a COP session, it would have to be issued by the secretariat drawing, inter alia, on the results of the work of the subsidiary bodies. The conclusions of the COP after consideration of the ROI would then serve to give general guidance to the secretariat for the preparation of subsequent ROIs. (It should be noted that for COP 1 it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the interim secretariat to prepare the ROI for release prior to that session, owing to the other anticipated demands on its time.)

(b) If, on the other hand, it is to be published after a COP session, the question arises as to whether the text would have to be considered and formally adopted by the COP prior to being released. This would imply that significant elements of the text would have to be drafted, translated and considered in the limited time available at a COP session. It is not inconceivable that such logistical challenges could prevent approval, and thus publication, of the ROI until after the following COP a year later. One means of avoiding such timing problems would be to mandate the secretariat to finalize the document on the basis of a discussion at the COP and under the guidance of the Bureau.

13. **What should be the frequency of publication of ROIs?** The Convention provides that a report on implementation should be issued regularly. Options include:

(a) A new ROI could be issued for, or subsequent to, each COP, that is, annually;

(b) A new ROI could be issued at intervals allowing enough time for new information to emerge. This could be linked to the frequency of national communications, which remains to be decided by the COP, and to the frequency of the major review exercises. Options include every two, three or four years;

(c) If option (b) were preferred, a variant on it might see the publication of an update for or after each COP during the years when a full ROI was not released.

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

14. The type and frequency of the ROI that is eventually agreed upon will condition the financial and human resource requirements for its preparation and production. If the Committee agrees that the content of the ROI should be drawn largely from other documents prepared for or by the COP, the additional secretariat requirements should be modest. If, on the other hand, the Committee were to decide that the ROI should be based on additional analytical work explicitly for the purposes of the ROI, the secretariat support needed would be considerably higher. The preparation of a first ROI is reflected as a proposed resource requirement for the interim secretariat in document A/AC.237/54.

15. In order to provide general indications of financial implications, the interim secretariat has developed cost estimates for two types of report:

(a) A concise document of 50 pages aimed at policy decision makers as well as the informed or interested public and written in a popular style; and

(b) A sizeable document of 200 pages aimed at an expert audience and written in a detailed, technical style.

16. The following table presents preliminary, broad-brush estimates of the associated financial and human resource requirements. More detailed figures can be developed once the Committee's views are known. **The estimates do not reflect the financial and human resource requirements for the production of the documentation from which the content of the ROI is assumed to be drawn.** If the document is to have a public outreach character, it will be important to ensure there are sufficient resources for its effective dissemination. The Information Unit on Climate Change of the United Nations Environment Programme/World Meteorological Organization could assist in disseminating the ROI.

	Option (a)		Option (b)	
	Function	**Work months**	**Function**	**Work months**
Staff requirements	officer	4-6	officer(s)	6-12
	communications or publications adviser	1-2	communications or publications adviser	2-3
	secretary	2-3	secretary	4-6
Financial costs	US dollars		US dollars	
Staff (from above)	105 000		210 000	
Translation (all languages)	20 000		90 000	
Production, design and printing (10 000 copies)	35 000		50 000	
Release and distribution	25 000		35 000	
TOTAL	180 000		385 000	

Annex

POSSIBLE FORMAT AND ELEMENTS OF THE FIRST REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION

1. The following proposals for the format and contents of the first ROI have been prepared with a view to giving the Committee a sense of what the document might entail. The proposals are based on an assumption that the first ROI would be published after, and report on the decisions taken at, COP 1. If the document were to be an input to COP 2, the context proposed below would have to be amended to take account of the work undertaken in preparation for the second session. In any case, a revised proposal on format and content would be included in the documentation for the tenth session, taking account of the comments made on this document.

Introduction

2. The introductory section could be used to provide the context and a brief history of the Convention. It could highlight the number of Parties, and identify them -- possibly using a graphic, chart or annex including Parties' percentage of global emissions and GDP -- and note those countries that had signed but not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention. Similar data for non-Parties might be provided for comparative purposes. This section could also report on any countries that had agreed to be bound by the obligations in paragraphs 2 (a) and (b) of Article 4 in accordance with Article 4.2(g).

Commitments -- mitigation and adaptation

3. This would clearly be the most challenging section to prepare because of the complexity of the issues and the volume of information to be presented. The following could be one approach:

Global situation

4. The subsection could have three main objectives:

(a) To summarize the most recent findings on the scientific understanding of climate change, its rate, magnitude and impacts;

(b) To present a comprehensive picture of global emissions and removals of greenhouse gases; and

(c) To relate this information to the objective of the Convention (Article 2).

5. The principal sources of information could include the report to the COP on the global situation (reflecting the conclusions of the IPCC) along with any relevant conclusions from the subsidiary bodies (if established on an interim basis), the national communications from Annex I Parties, and any information received on a voluntary basis from other Parties.

6. Data could be expected to include:

(a) Concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere (historical, current and available projections) with an emphasis on identifying trends;

(b) Aggregate global emissions and removals of GHGs for 1990 and any available scenarios, with breakdowns by gas and by sector in accordance with the agreed methodologies for inventories and the guidelines for national communications; and

(c) Any new information on the level of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system and the time-frame within which such a level should be achieved, with reference to ecosystem adaptation, non-disruption of food production and sustainable economic development.

7. Some disaggregated information might also be useful. For example, emissions and removals by Annex I countries and, depending on the availability of reliable aggregate information, by non-Annex I countries as a group could be presented. (Other disaggregations might also be possible.) In view of Article 4.6, some data specific to the countries with economies in transition might also be appropriate.

8. Some assessment of the relationship between the projected emissions on the one hand, and the Convention objective and the benchmarks established in Article 4.2(a) and (b) on the other, could be appropriate. It should be kept in mind that this information would not be developed primarily for the ROI; rather, it would be extracted from other documents prepared for and submitted to COP 1.

9. This section could also report on progress in improving methodologies and identify methodological challenges that need to be addressed.

Article 4.1 commitments

10. The focus of this section could be to report on implementation of the commitments in Article 4.1, drawing on the Annex I Parties' national communications. Of particular importance would be information on the following: 1/

(a) National and/or regional mitigation programmes (Article 4.1(b)) -- to the extent that these are not addressed in the following section on policies and measures;

(b) Sink enhancement (Article 4.1(d));

(c) National and/or regional adaptation programmes and preparations for adaptation (Article 4.1(b) and (e));

(d) How climate change considerations have been taken into account (Article 4.1(f));

(e) Research and systematic observation (Article 4.1(g) and Article 5);

(f) Exchange of information (Article 4.1(h)); and

(g) Education, training and public awareness (Article 4.1(i) and Article 6).

Annex I Parties' policies and measures

11. This subsection could be drawn from the national communications of Annex I Parties, or any technical analysis and compilation and synthesis documents that will be prepared. It could provide a comprehensive overview of the types of policies and measures being implemented. Summary charts, possibly disaggregated by Party and by measure, could be a useful way to present much of this information.

12. The ROI could also report on the information received relating to the environmental, economic and social impacts of the policies and measures implemented, in particular their projected effects on emissions.

Review of adequacy of commitments and any follow-up action

13. This subsection could, depending on the nature of the ROI, report on any decisions taken by COP 1 with regard to the adequacy of commitments in accordance with Article 4.2(d). If these decisions related to amendments to the Convention or protocols, reporting on the implementation of Articles 15 (Amendments) and 17 (Protocols) would then be appropriate.

Joint implementation

14. The ROI could report on the decisions taken by the COP with regard to criteria for joint implementation. In this context, it could also report on joint implementation activities included in national communications and the overall contribution they have made to achieving the objective of the Convention.

Commitments -- finance and technology

15. This section could report on the implementation of Articles 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 7.2(h), 11 and 21.3. For the first ROI, it could be based on the communications from Annex II Parties, the report to COP 1 by the interim operating entity of the financial mechanism and, depending on the nature of the ROI, any decisions taken by the COP with regard to the financial mechanism.

16. The principal elements of the section could include information on:

(a) A report on any decisions taken by COP 1 related to the financial mechanism, including the rationale for such decisions;

(b) The contributions to the interim operating entity of the financial mechanism by Annex II Parties and their reported financial transfers through channels other than the interim operating entity (as provided for in Article 11.5);

(c) A report on the operations of the interim operating entity relating to the funding of climate change (for example, replenishment levels; proposed or agreed level of funding for the Framework Convention on Climate Change and for the climate change focal area, including considerations on the adequacy and predictability in the flow of funds; climate change project funding to date and future activities to the extent known); and

(d) A report on activities related to technology transfer and cooperation, including endogenous capacity building, carried out through the financial mechanism, other official channels and by the private sector.

Convention institutions

17. The section on Convention institutions could report on how the main institutions of the Convention were operating (with the exception of the financial mechanism which would be treated separately). It would focus on the activities of, or plans for, the SBSTA and the SBI, particularly with regard to how they would operate to facilitate the on-going implementation of the Convention. An assessment of the first round of the process for the communication and consideration of information could be useful as might a description of the planned future arrangements.

18. Brief reports could also be provided on significant developments related to the COP and to the designation of the permanent secretariat, its funding, structure and key activities. It might also be useful to report on cooperation with competent international organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies (Article 7.2(l)) and on the relevant activities of such bodies.

Note

1/ This is only a partial listing of the elements in Article 4.1. Those omitted were deemed to be covered by the following paragraphs of this note:

Article 4.1(a) by paragraph 7
Article 4.1(c) by paragraph 16(d)
Article 4.1(j) by paragraph 17

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